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LETTER DATED 13 AUGUST 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to bring to your attention the declaration on the situation in Afghanistan issued on 10 August 1999 by the Presidency of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Marjatta RASI
Permanent Representative of Finland
to the United Nations

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Declaration on the situation in Afghanistan issued on 10 August 1999 by the Presidency of the European Union

The European Union expresses its profound concern at the recent escalation of the military confrontation in Afghanistan. The European Union is dismayed that the Taliban should have ignored the call in the Tashkent Declaration for the Afghan conflict to be settled through peaceful political negotiation and should have instead launched a major offensive.

The European Union appeals to the warring parties to cease fighting immediately and to return to the negotiating table. The European Union reiterates its stand on Afghanistan, expressed in the common position of January 1999, and will continue to give its full support to the United Nations efforts in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan.

The European Union is particularly concerned about the suffering the fighting is causing to the civilian population and about the deteriorating humanitarian condition of the increasing number of internally displaced persons. All the parties should abide by the principles of international law, including respect for universal human rights and humanitarian law, and ensure free and safe access for humanitarian aid.

The European Union is profoundly disturbed by the reports of forced deportation of civilians by the Taliban from their places of residence. The European Union urges the Taliban to end this practice immediately and to allow those forcibly deported to return.

The European Union call upon all those States which interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan to stop. The European Union further calls on the neighbouring States to prevent the flow of arms and personnel from and through their countries and to use their influence with Afghan factions to support the United Nations peace efforts.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, and the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this declaration.